

How much do you love Jesus?

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- One bright, beautiful Sunday morning, everyone in the small town got up early and went to the local church.
Before the services started, the townspeople were sitting in their pews. Suddenly, Satan appeared at the front of the church. Everyone started screaming and running for the entrance, trampling each other in a frantic effort to get away from an evil incarnate. Soon everyone was evacuated from the church, except for one elderly gentleman who sat calmly in his pew, not moving.....seemingly oblivious to the fact that God's ultimate enemy was in his presence.

Now this confused and irritated the Devil a bit, so he walked up to the man and said,

"Don't you know who I am?"

- **"Yep, sure do,"** the elderly man said.
- Satan asked, **"Aren't you afraid of me?"**
- This time the man said, **"Nope, sure ain't!"**
- Satan, a little more perturbed at this, asked, **"Why aren't you afraid of me?"**
- The man calmly replied, **"Been married to your sister for 56 years."**

Should we love Jesus?

- Matthew 22:37 - Jesus replied: “Love (Agape) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”
- Agape = represents divine, unconditional, self-sacrificing, active and thoughtful love.
- An author describes it as defines it as "the love that consumes," i.e., the highest and purest form of love, one that surpasses all other types of affection.

Short story

This time he was in serious trouble. He had already offended enough important people to get himself in hot water. But never anything as bad as this.

His friends wanted to help. They were all young men, robust, determined, in the prime of life, eager to pursue what they believed in. They got together to discuss what they could do. None of their ideas would do much. And they knew it. Things were too far gone

The conversation slowly shifted from ideas to complaints. They were mad. It just wasn't fair. Politics! That's all it was. Dirty, rotten politics.

Soon after the meeting, one of them, a swarthy, big man with olive skin weathered by many days at sea, tried to pick a fight with a flunky from the other side, thinking it would really feel good to hit someone. Even bad language gave some relief. But why wouldn't *He* do something? It was, after all, his battle, a battle for his neck.

Everyone was scared. All their hopes were crumbling. What would they do? What would happen to them if he were sent away? That was all they could think about

Suddenly he called them together, Good! Now we're getting somewhere. He has a plan. He's ready to move, to take charge like a man. But all he said was, "Things are going to get pretty rough. And it's starting to get to me. I want you to stick close by." They had seen him troubled before. But not like this.

They wanted to stay involved with him. They really did. But it was hard to stand there helplessly and just watch. And they hadn't slept in days.

Why hadn't he spoken up at his hearing? He had friends in high places. Why didn't he call on them? He wasn't doing anything to help himself. He seemed resigned – no, willing – to endure terrible trouble as though it were his destiny

He stayed so quiet, so calm. How did he manage to keep his cool and not scream for justice – or revenge? Through it all, right up to the end, he cared more about his friends – and his enemies – than about himself, even though he was the one facing his own worst nightmare.

Someone who had been watching him for some time put into words what many were thinking: “No man ever loved like this one!”

God is Love

- 1John 4:8 - Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.
- Lets substitute God = Jesus = love into 1 Corinthians 13
- Jesus is *patient*. 2 Peter 3:9
- Jesus is *kind*. Mark 1:41
- Jesus *does not envy* John 19:10
- Jesus *does not boast* Matthew 17:1-4

God = Jesus = love

- *Jesus is not proud.* John 17: 4-5
- *Jesus is not rude.* John 2:4 / 19:26
- *Jesus is not self-seeking.* Mark 8
- *Jesus is not easily angered.* Psalm 103:8
- *Jesus does not keep record of wrongs.* Jeremiah 31:33-34
- *Jesus does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth*
- *Jesus always protects (John 17:11), always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (Heb 12:2)*

Short – changed?

- One man to die for all man?
- Like us becoming an ant, to be mocked and ridiculed by ants, to die as an ant...so that all ants can be saved.
- If the world consist of only one man, would Jesus do it?
- If He were to do it all over again, just for you, do you think He will?

Do you Obey God's Word?

- 1 John 2:3 – By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”
- Greek word of ‘keep’ speaks of watchful, careful, thoughtful obedience.
- Involves not only the act of obedience, but also the spirit of obedience – a willing, habitual safeguarding of the Word, not just in letter but in spirit.
- Supported by the word ‘commandments’ which refers to the precepts of Christ rather than laws in general

Do you love others?

- *You love Jesus, as much as the person you love the least.*
- Matthew 25 - Jesus says: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me...whatever you *did not do* for one of the least of these you did not do for me.”
- Philippians 2:3-8 — Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility *consider others better than yourselves*. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, *but made himself nothing*, taking on the very nature of a servant...*he humbled himself and became obedient to death*, even death on a cross.

Do you love others?

- Jesus went so far as to say “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35)
- 1 Peter 1:22 - Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

Do you love others?

- Sensitive Concern / hypocritical love
- Sacrificial nature / selfish ambitions
- Dutiful / shirking our responsibilities
- John 15:13 – Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
- 1 John 3:17-18 – If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth

Do you eagerly await Christ's return?

- 1 John 3:2-3 - Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.
- Phil 3:20-21 - But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.
- Romans 8:23 - Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Do you eagerly await Christ's return?

- Titus 2:11-13 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ
- Purifies the one possessing such hope.
- Sensible hope = sensible living
- Heavenly minded while fulfilling our earthly responsibilities

Conclusion

- 1 John 3:1 - How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
- Hebrews 12:3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.